

CLAIRE McCASKILL  
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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 6, 2014

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Chairman Tom Wheeler  
445 12th St SW  
Washington, DC 20554-0004

Dear Chairman Wheeler,

I am writing to express my support for the Intercounty Electric Cooperative Association's (IECA) expression of interest in the Federal Communications Commission's Connect America Cost Model. Their proposal is entitled the Rural Fiber to the Home (FTTH) Pilot Project.

In conjunction with the Rural Electrification Administration, the IECA has historically brought electricity to un-served rural areas in the United States. As a trusted local utility, the IECA now repeatedly receives requests for reliable and affordable broadband services from its members. In accordance with its mission and its role in the rural community it serves, IECA wishes to step up and provide their members with the services they are requesting.

After extensive research, the IECA believes a FTTH solution is the most reliable way to provide sufficient broadband capacity and speed. IECA is proposing an initial pilot project to establish the scalability of FTTH before future expansions to serve its entire service area. The scale of the initial pilot project would be limited to an initial trial build out of two substations in Texas County serving a census block. This project is designed to provide high-speed broadband for the 2667 members served from the pilot substations and covering roughly 157 square miles. This project would represent a build out of roughly 6% of the cooperative's distribution lines in an area that has a population density that averages 7.56 homes per mile of line.

Thank you in advance for your full and fair consideration of this application. Please keep me apprised of the progress of their application.

Sincerely,



Claire McCaskill  
United States Senator



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

April 11, 2014

The Honorable Claire McCaskill  
United States Senate  
506 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator McCaskill:

Thank you for your letter regarding Intercounty Electric Cooperative Association's (IECA) and its Fiber-to-the-Premises (FFTP) broadband deployment project. I appreciate your views and will ensure that your letter will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

In a unanimously adopted *Technology Transitions Order* (Order) in January, the Commission recognized that particular challenges exist for the deployment of next generation communications services in rural areas. In order to inform our policies on building next generation networks in rural America, the Commission invited proposals parties to submit expressions of interest to determine whether there is interest into constructing high bandwidth networks in rural, high-cost areas, including Tribal lands.

A diverse set of entities have filed nearly 1,000 expressions of interest, including rural telephone companies, electric co-ops, cable and wireless Internet service providers, schools and libraries, research and education networks, and rural communities. The proposals reflect the understanding that high bandwidth services are becoming increasingly important to the future of economic development, education, health care, government services, entertainment, information, communication and creativity.

The Commission currently is reviewing the expressions of interest that have been submitted, and we have sought public comment on a number of rural broadband experiment issues, including the size of the budget and selection criteria to be used in reviewing proposals. After completing a review of the submissions and the record in response to our further notice of proposed rulemaking, the Commission would adopt an order setting a budget and establishing detailed selection criteria for rural broadband experiments. At that point, we would invite parties, such as IECA, to submit formal proposals for consideration by Commission staff.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", written over a horizontal line.

Tom Wheeler